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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2542

Jan. 24, 1992

GATT AGREEMENT -- GATT Director-General **Arthur Dunkel**'s proposed compromise agreement provides a framework for finalizing the GATT Uruguay Round, says U.S. Ambassador **Rufus H. Yerxa**. The U.S. believes further changes to the draft are not needed unless they will strengthen the disciplines or lead to greater market liberalization, according to Yerxa. What if the GATT talks fail? If no agreement is reached by June 30, the 1990 Farm Act requires the secretary of agriculture to increase the EEP by \$1 million. Under this law, marketing loans for wheat and feed grains also would be triggered. **Contact: Roger Runnigen** (202) 720-4623.

SWINE EXPORTS TO MEXICO -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says swine from the U.S. destined for slaughter or breeding purposes can once again be exported to Mexico. Mexico had temporarily banned live hog imports since Dec. 15. "The removal of the temporary ban will allow pork producers and others to resume extensive agricultural trading with Mexico, one of our largest trading partners," Madigan said. In 1991, U.S. farmers exported more than 195,000 swine to Mexico. **Contact: Isabelle Ferrera** (301) 436-7255.

GREAT PLAINS WIND EROSION DOWN -- Wind erosion was down significantly on Great Plains cropland and rangeland during November and December, compared to the same period a year earlier, says **William Richards**, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. Richards says the agency's survey of wind erosion for the past season shows about 1.59 million acres of Great Plains cropland and rangeland were damaged -- some 250,000 acres less than in 1990. **Contact: Ted Kupelian** (202) 720-5776.

MODEL FARM IN RUSSIA -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has sent a team of American farm experts to Russia to explore opportunities for developing a model farm near St. Petersburg. "American farmers lead the world in efficient food and fiber production," Madigan said. "If achieved, this demonstration farm could demonstrate our farming expertise to Russian farmers. If we are successful, this effort can be of great value to the Russian people as they progress toward a market-based economy. **Contact: Roger Runnigen** (202) 720-4623.

THE MORE THAN 20 MILLION men and women who provide the food and fiber Americans use every day will be honored March 20 during National Agriculture Day and March 19 on National Women in Agriculture Day. National Agricultural Week will be March 15 - 21. Both producers and consumers have a responsibility to help the public understand the challenges the ag industry faces in continuing to meet and fulfill our food and fiber needs. **Contact: Margaret Speich** (202) 682-9200.

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READ MEAT AND POULTRY SUPPLIES HIGH -- Red meat and poultry supplies are expected to be at an all time high in 1992 due to continued expansion in pork and poultry. Livestock and poultry prices will be damped by the large supplies and the continuing recession. However, the economy is expected to begin recovering in the next few months and supply increases will taper off, especially in the second half of 1992. **Contact: Leland Southard** (202) 219-0767.

FOOD COSTS -- The farmer's share of farm to retail 1990 market basket food prices paid by consumers averaged 30 percent, unchanged in the last four years. However, how much of the consumer's grocery dollar winds up in the farmer's pocket is dictated by the commodity or product produced. **Contact: Denis F. Dunham** (202) 219-0870.

NEW ANIMAL INSPECTION CENTER -- USDA has added Santa Teresa, N.M., to the list of approved U.S.-Mexican border ports for the entry of cattle and other ruminants from Mexico. The Santa Teresa facility will replace the nearest border port entry station, which is now located ten miles away at El Paso, Texas, says **Lonnie King**, deputy administrator for veterinary services with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. **Contact: Alan Zagier** (301) 436-7799.

POTATO STOCKS UP -- Potato stocks on Jan. 1 were 211 million hundred-weight, up 8 percent from last year and 22 percent higher than two years ago. USDA surveys producers in the 15 major potato-producing states: California, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin. The potato types are: 79 percent russet potatoes, 18 percent white and 3 percent red. **Contact: Arvin Budge** (202) 720-4285.

USDA TO AID TREE FARMERS -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has implemented a program to help tree growers whose trees were lost due to disasters. Under the Tree Assistance Program, USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will reimburse eligible small- and medium-scale commercial tree growers for a portion of losses caused by natural disasters occurring in 1990 and 1991. "By implementing the Tree Assistance Program we will provide much needed relief to growers in those parts of the country who have suffered severe losses to orchards and tree stands because of drought, freeze or earthquake," Madigan said. **Contact: Robert Feist** (202) 720-6789.

PLEASE SEND OR FAX CHANGES in your address or personnel to us as soon as possible. Our goal is to keep our mailing lists current for the **Farm Broadcasters Letter** and our other services. Mail or FAX (202) 690-2165 your changes to **Mocile Trotter**, USDA Broadcasting, Rm. 410-A, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1807 -- Cutting fat intake, looking for sugar substitutes and more are covered on this week's edition of **Agriculture USA**, as **Maria Bynum** and several experts look at future foods and fads. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1289 -- Hunting for firewood; future foods; a winter weather forecast; telephone scams; eat those plates and forks. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS AND FEATURES #1798 -- USDA News Highlights; 1992 common program provisions; a trade update; future for canola; the El Nino strikes. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1504 -- High vitamin A tomatoes; Galapagos tomatoes; pasta versus weeds; sugar, copper and heart disease; high-amylose foods. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., Jan. 29, stories from the USDA News Briefing on the Fiscal Year 1993 budget; Thurs., Jan. 30, world tobacco situation; Fri., Jan. 31, world poultry situation, ag prices, cattle on feed; Mon., Feb. 3, catfish production, horticultural exports; Tues., Feb. 4, crop/weather update; Fri., Feb. 7, cattle numbers. **(These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on conservation compliance; **Will Pemble** takes a look at enzymes for insect control.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather and crops; USDA economist **Steve MacDonald** on ag trade; FmHA administrator **LaVerne Ausman** on FmHA emergency loans; USDA World Board chairman **James Donald** on U.S. cotton; USDA soil scientist **Jeri Berc** on wind erosion.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on holly varieties; **Pat O'Leary** takes a look at lawn landscaping; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the National Arboretum's Bonsai Collection.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST.

OFFMIKE

FARMERS...from all over the midwest attended the Illinois Specialty Growers Association conference, Jan. 12-14 in St. Charles, Ill., says **Marla Behrends** (WKAN, Kankakee). The conference had 125 booths and 80 educational sessions, which provided information about new ways to earn money on the farm. Marla, who broadcast her noon farm show live from the site, says an increased number of commodity crop growers attended the conference. At the Corn Growers convention, Feb. 23-26 in Orlando, Fla., Marla will serve as M.C. with Ken Root (National Agrichemical Retailers Association, Washington, D.C.).

MAJOR STORY...affecting farmers in the Peoria, Ill., area is a large grain elevator surrendering its license to operate, says **Colleen Callahan** (WMBD-TV, Peoria). She says her interviews with the new manager revealed the firm overbuilt its storage capacity just when crops were getting smaller due to drought and other factors. Many patrons will get 85 to 100 percent of the first \$100,000 from the state grain insurance fund.

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EXPORT MARKET DEVELOPMENTS...are important news items to farmers watching the reports of **Wade Wagner** (KGAN-TV, Cedar Rapids, Iowa). He says they're especially interested in export credits to the Commonwealth of Independent States and opening Japan's markets. Wade plans to host a farm tour to Austria this fall.

NEW FEATURE...that has generated viewer response is the Farm Dog of the Week, says **Brian Baxter** (Morning Ag Report, Indianapolis, Ind.). He says the pictures and stories sent in are fun and show that dogs can be an important part of the farm family. Brian says equipment sales indicate no-till is being used by more farmers. Many dealers report back orders for drills.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division